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DEPT FOR AF/E M. BEYZEROV AND AF/S C. KARBUR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/05/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [CN](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA TO HOST COMOROS TALKS

REF: A. NEUBERT-BEYZEROV EMAIL OF 7/6/07

[B](#). ANTANANARIVO 0642

[C](#). ANTANANARIVO 0625

Classified By: Political Counselor Raymond Brown. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) South Africa will host AU-sponsored talks on the political crisis in Comoros July 7-9 in Pretoria, according to Department of Foreign Affairs Director Graham Maitland (protect). (NOTE: South African ForMin Dlamini-Zuma is Chair of the "African Union Ministerial Committee of Countries of the Region on Comoros." END NOTE.) Maitland told PolOff July 6 that the Pretoria talks will focus on holding new elections in Anjouan, although they would also deal with broader issues, including other "deep-seated problems" in the country.

[2](#). (C) The Pretoria negotiations are a "natural follow-on" to the June 24 AU Mission to the Comoros, led by ForMin Dlamini-Zuma. Maitland noted the AU Mission visit to Anjouan was very brief due to delays in their departure from South Africa (because of Dlamini-Zuma's illness) and logistical constraints (the need to depart Anjouan before dark).

[3](#). (C) Maitland appeared optimistic the talks would make progress. He said their June 24 discussions with Anjouan "President" Bacar went well, and that Bacar is willing to organize new elections under certain conditions (NFI). The issue is not as "black and white" as portrayed in the press, Maitland said. He hinted at South Africa's frustration with President Sambu, suggesting that "both sides" need to compromise, not just Bacar. Maitland even speculated that Bacar might win a new election in Anjouan.

[4](#). (C) ForMin Dlamini-Zuma will chair the Pretoria talks, assisted by DFA Deputy Director General for Africa Multilateral Jesse Duarte and Maitland. Sambu will not attend, but the Union Vice President and Foreign Minister will. Bacar is planning to participate, although Maitland said Bacar was having logistical problems finalizing his travel to South Africa.

[5](#). (C) COMMENT: The effort to facilitate talks between the Union government and Bacar is typical South African diplomacy. Pretoria profoundly believes that if two sides talk enough -- like the ANC did with the National party -- a peaceful, negotiated agreement is possible. The fact that the Union Government's position on elections in Anjouan is legally correct matters less to South Africa than the possibility that the two sides can reach some sort of

practical arrangement to preserve stability. END COMMENT.
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